

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

This listing of the claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

**Listing of the Claims**

1-21. (canceled)

22. (new) A biocompatible, hemostatic, cross-linked gelatin composition comprising:

a cross-linked gelatin sponge; and

a wetting agent;

wherein the wetting agent is coated on at least a substantial portion of the surface of the gelatin sponge; and

wherein the wetting agent facilitates spreading and penetration of an aqueous solution into the gelatin sponge thereby decreasing a hydration time of the gelatin sponge.

23. (new) The biocompatible, hemostatic, cross-linked gelatin composition of Claim 22, wherein the gelatin composition is bioabsorbable.

24. (new) The biocompatible, hemostatic, cross-linked gelatin composition of Claim 22, wherein the wetting agent is an anionic surfactant.

25. (new) The biocompatible, hemostatic, cross-linked gelatin composition of Claim 24, wherein the wetting agent is selected from the group consisting of polyoxyalkylenes, ether capped polyoxyalkylenes, ester capped polyoxyalkylenes, polyethylene oxides, carboxymethyl cellulose, polyvinyl alcohol, polyvinyl pyrrolidone, sorbitan esters, phosphatides, alkyl amines, and glycerin.

26. (new) The biocompatible, hemostatic, cross-linked gelatin composition of Claim 22, wherein the wetting agent is selected from the group consisting of alkyl (C<sub>6</sub>-C<sub>20</sub>) sulfate salts, aryl (C<sub>6</sub>-C<sub>10</sub>) sulfate salts, and alkaryl (C<sub>7</sub>-C<sub>24</sub>) sulfate salts.

27. (new) The biocompatible, hemostatic, cross-linked gelatin composition of Claim 22, wherein the gelatin composition comprises from about 0.01 to about 5 weight percent of the wetting agent.

28. (new) The biocompatible, hemostatic, cross-linked gelatin composition of Claim 22, wherein the wetting agent is coated on at least a substantial portion of the surface of the gelatin sponge by soaking the gelatin sponge in a coating solution including the wetting agent and a solvent, followed by evaporation of the solvent from the coating solution.

29. (new) The biocompatible, hemostatic, cross-linked gelatin composition of Claim 28, wherein the coating solution comprises from about 0.01 to about 20 weight percent of the wetting agent.

30. (new) The biocompatible, hemostatic, cross-linked gelatin composition of Claim 22, wherein the gelatin composition is sterilized and packaged for use in surgical procedures.

31. (new) The biocompatible, hemostatic, cross-linked gelatin of Claim 22, wherein the gelatin composition further comprises a growth factor.

32. (new) The biocompatible, hemostatic, cross-linked gelatin of Claim 22, wherein the gelatin composition further comprises a thrombus enhancing agent.

33 (new) The biocompatible, hemostatic, cross-linked gelatin of Claim 22, wherein the gelatin composition further comprises an antimicrobial agent

34. (new) A method for decreasing the hydration time of a biocompatible, hemostatic, cross-linked gelatin composition, comprising the steps of:

providing an aqueous solution;

providing a cross-linked gelatin composition including a cross-linked gelatin sponge and a wetting agent, wherein the wetting agent is coated on at least a substantial portion of the surface of the gelatin sponge and facilitates spreading and penetration of the aqueous solution into the gelatin sponge, thereby decreasing a hydration time of the gelatin sponge; and

contacting the gelatin composition with the aqueous solution.

35. (new) The method of Claim 34, wherein the wetting agent is coated on at least a substantial portion of the surface of the gelatin sponge by soaking the gelatin sponge in a coating solution including the wetting agent and a solvent, and evaporation of the solvent from the coating solution.

36 (new) The method of Claim 35, wherein the coating solution comprises from about 0.01 to about 20 weight percent of the wetting agent.

37 (new) The method of Claim 34, wherein the gelatin composition comprises from about 0.01 to about 5 weight percent of the wetting agent.

38. (new) The method of Claim 34, wherein the gelatin composition is bioabsorbable.

39. (new) A kit of parts for preparing a biocompatible, hemostatic, cross-linked gelatin composition comprising a syringe and a non-hydrated pledget, said pledget consisting of a cross-linked gelatin sponge substantially coated with a wetting agent, wherein the wetting agent facilitates spreading and penetration of an aqueous solution into the gelatin sponge, thereby decreasing a hydration time of the gelatin sponge

40. (new) The kit of Claim 39, wherein the wetting agent is coated on at least a substantial portion of the surface of the gelatin sponge by soaking the gelatin sponge in a coating solution including the wetting agent and a solvent, and evaporation of the solvent from the coating solution.

41. (new) The kit of Claim 39, wherein the gelatin composition comprises from about 0.01 to about 5 weight percent of the wetting agent.